

ER

Executive Order 12958  
82.2110

15 January 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR:

[REDACTED]  
PRB Legal Advisor

STAT

THROUGH:

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM:

Lavon B. Strong  
Chairman, Publications Review Board

SUBJECT:

Completed PRB Review - Stansfield Turner, Hooray for Leak Control (548-82)

1. The PRB has completed without security objection its review of the above manuscript.

2. Upon DDCI concurrence, please notify Admiral Turner of the Board's decision. He has requested a response today.

[REDACTED]  
*for* Lavon B. Strong

STAT

CONCUR:

*79/* [REDACTED]

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

15 JAN 1982

Date

B-205

MEMO from Stansfield Turner

1/15/82

To: Publication Review Board-

Request clearance  
on the attached article  
as rapidly as possible

Turner

Office phone 553-2863

## Hooray for Leak Control

Stansfield Turner

The President has established new controls to curtail leaks of classified government information. The various media are not providing the public a balanced response to this commendable effort. They are telling us; that inhibitions on public servants will result in a less well informed media and hence a less well informed public; that no such system of controls has ever worked anyway; and that the government will continue to leak when it wants to for its own advantages. What is missing is a discussion of the damage that is done through unauthorized leaks.

First there is the endangering of our sources of intelligence information. We may spend billions of dollars on a new technical system for collecting data and then give away the secret for counter-acting it. We may endanger the life of a foreign agent who is taking risks at our request and on our behalf. Perhaps, even more importantly, by lessening confidence in our ability to protect our agents, we reduce the probability that we will be able to recruit the agents today whom we'll need five to ten years from now.

Second, we do direct damage to our foreign policy and our military readiness by tipping our hand

-2-

or describing our capabilities. Perhaps the most significant element here is that we are often denied opportunities <sup>To take foreign policy initiatives</sup> just because the risk of a leak is so high. In my opinion, one of the key reasons that the hostage rescue raid into Iran did not succeed was the perceived necessity for extreme measures to prevent leaks during the planning process. And even at that, the fact that an action of some sort was underway with respect to the hostages was beginning to be perceived by newsmen by the time the raid took place. WV

Leaks of security informations are, in my view, the single most serious handicap to our foreign policy internal to our government. Certainly, leaks are the greatest problem our intelligence agencies face. Most Presidents have had to face this issue. Some made valiant attempts to control leaks, some <sup>unlawful</sup> ~~egregious~~ ones. President Reagan's approach is certainly neither doomed to failure nor is it <sup>unlawful</sup> ~~egregious~~. He deserves a trial period to demonstrate that his new controls will not be abused by over classification or by selective leaks. H

One reason that it is worth giving the President's plan a try is that the dangers of controls are being grossly exaggerated. What do leaks accomplish for our country? They often simply advance the time at which the public will be informed and in so

~~document must be destroyed by a foreign~~

-3-

doing pre-empt or destroy a foreign policy/ initiative. Or they release some detail of classified data that is well beyond the interest or comprehension of the general public. For instance, when our hostages were being held in Iran there were particular threats against those whom the Iranians identified as having been with the CIA. Two major newspapers published detailed descriptions about how to identify a CIA person from other embassy employees based on records which the Iranian captors held. I wrote to the editors and complained that the American public ~~was~~ hardly needed the specifics in this instance and that ~~the~~ lives might be at stake. ~~Responded that~~ Both editors responded that it was their duty to publish such information despite its irrelevance to informing our public.

The principal argument for not discouraging the illegal practice of leaking is that someone will uncover another Watergate by this means. That is a risk, but would a set of controls such as the President has established dissuade either a Woodward and Bernstein team or a Deep Throat from doing what they each did?

Woodward and Bernstein provided a valuable public service, But the popularity of investigative

-4-

reporting and of whistle blowing has risen too far.  
There is little ~~question~~ question that the public  
interest today lies on the side of curbing the ex-  
cesses of unauthorized leaks to which we have sub-  
jected ourselves. Let's give the Presideant's plan a  
fair trial and ~~in~~ wish him luck.